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Our Ref. No.: IGT1P040/P-363
Application No.: 09/690,925

Re: Meeting Agenda for 1/14/2004 Teleconference

Pages Including Cover Sheet(s): 9

MESSAGE:

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of: Crumby	Attorney Docket No.: IGT1P040/P-363
Application No.: 09/690,925	Examiner: C. Marks
Filed: October 17, 2000	Group: 3713
Title: MULTI-SYSTEM GAMING TERMINAL COMMUNICATION DEVICE	

Meeting Agenda for 1-14-2004 Teleconference

A. Discuss difference between invention of present application and player tracking unit. In particular, present invention is designed to be always transparent to master gaming controller and does not interact with software on the gaming machine. These capabilities allow the present invention to be used as after market device that does not require changing EPROM on older gaming machine which is costly.

(X) Examiner has indicated that player tracking unit is sometimes transparent leading to obviousness rejection

B. Possible claim limitations:
i) "always transparent,"
ii) "capable of providing communications multiplexing without actively interacting with software on the gaming machine."

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Listing of Claims for Examiners Convenience

1. (Previously Amended) A gaming machine comprising:

a master gaming controller designed or configured to control a game played on the gaming machine wherein each game played on the gaming machine includes receiving a wager for the game, determining the game outcome and the presenting the game outcome and to communicate with one or more game service servers wherein each game service server provides at least one game service;

a communication multiplexer device connected to the master gaming controller wherein the communication multiplexer device is transparent to the master gaming controller allowing the master gaming controller to communicate with a particular game service server without knowing whether the communication multiplexer device is in a communication path between the master gaming controller and the particular game service server, the communication multiplexer device comprising

(i) a plurality of communication ports wherein each communication port is capable of transmitting and receiving messages with the master gaming controller using a native communication protocol,

(ii) an output communication port for transmitting and for receiving messages with the one or more game service servers using a second communication protocol, and

(iii) processor logic that multiplexes and demultiplexes messages between the plurality of communication ports and the output communication port and that converts between the native communication protocol and the second communication protocol; and

a network interface connected to the output communication port that receives and transmits messages using the second communication protocol.

2. (Original) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the game service is selected from group consisting of progressive game services, bonus game services, player tracking services, cashless ticketing services, game downloading services, prize services, entertainment content services, concierge services, lottery services and money transfer services.

3. (Original) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the network interface is a wireless radio connection.

4. (Original) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the network interface is a wired Ethernet connection.

5. (Original) The gaming machine of claim 3, further comprising:

an antenna for transmitting and receiving communications over the wireless radio connection.

6. (Original) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the native communication protocol is selected from the group consisting of a progressive game service protocol, a bonus game service protocol, a player tracking service protocol, a cashless ticketing service protocol, a game downloading service protocol, a prize service protocol, an entertainment content service protocol, a concierge service protocol, a lottery service protocol and a money transfer service protocol.

7. (Previously Amended) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the plurality of communication ports comprises a first communication port using a first native communication protocol a second communication port using a second native communication protocol.

8. (Previously Amended) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the plurality of communication ports comprises a first communication port that receives and sends messages from a first game service server and a second communication port that receives and send messages from a second game service server.

9. (Original) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein communication between the gaming machine and the one or more game servers is encrypted.

10. (Previously Amended) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the processor logic is capable of configuring each of the plurality of communication ports to emulate a native communication protocol.

11. (Previously Amended) The gaming machine of claim 10, wherein the communication multiplexer communication device is capable of communicating with a boot server to determine the native communication protocol to be used on each of the plurality of communication ports.

12. (Original) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the one or more game service servers are selected from the group consisting of a prize server, a game server, an entertainment content server, a cashless ticketing server, progressive game server, a bonus game server, a concierge service server, a lottery server and a money transfer server.

13. (Original) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the game played on the gaming machine is at least one of a video slot game, a mechanical slot game, a lottery game, a video poker game, a video black jack game, and a video pachinko game.

14. (Original) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the second communication protocol is a TCP/IP communication protocol.

15. (Original) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the gaming machine employs regulated gaming software that provides messages in the native communication protocol and wherein the regulated gaming software is not modified to accept messages transmitted in the second communication protocol.

16. (Previously Amended) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein a physical interface of the one or more communication ports is selected from the group consisting of RS-422/485, Fiber Optic, RS-232, DCS Current Loop, Link Progressive Current Loop, IEEE (Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers) 1394-compatible, Ethernet and USB (Universal Serial BUS)-compatible.

17. (Previously Amended) A multiplexer communication device for multiplexing communications between a master gaming controller on a gaming machine and one or more game service servers, the multiplexer communication device comprising:

a plurality of communication ports wherein each communication port transmits and receives messages between the gaming machine and the multiplexer communication device in a native communication protocol;

a multi-port communication board allowing each communication port to be configured to accept multiple native communication protocols;

an output communication port that transmits messages addressed to one or more game servers and receives messages from one or more game service servers addressed to one of the plurality of communication ports using a second communication protocol; and

processor logic that is capable of multiplexing and demultiplexing messages between the plurality of communication ports and the output communication port and that converts between the native communication protocol and the second communication protocol wherein the communication multiplexer device is transparent to the master gaming controller in its communications with the one or more game service servers allowing the master gaming controller to communicate with a particular game service server without knowing whether the communication multiplexer device is in a communication path between the master gaming controller and the particular game service server.

18. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, wherein the gaming machine employs regulated gaming software that provides messages in the native communication protocol to the one or more communication ports and wherein the regulated gaming software is not modified to accept messages transmitted in the second communication protocol.

19. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, further comprising:

an EEPROM that provides configuration information to the processor board.

20. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, further comprising:

a firewall connected to the output communication port.

21. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, further comprising:

a power supply.

22. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, further comprising:

a network interface board.

23. (Original) The communication mutliplexer device of claim 22, wherein the network interface board provides a wireless radio network interface.

24. (Original) The communication mutliplexer device of claim 22, wherein the network interface board provides a Ethernet network interface.

25. (Original) The communication mutliplexer device of claim 17, wherein the second communication protocol is a TCP/IP communication protocol.

26. (Original) The communication mutliplexer device of claim 17, wherein the native communication protocol is selected from the group consisting of a progressive game service protocol, a bonus game service protocol, a player tracking service protocol, a cashless ticketing service protocol, a game downloading service protocol, a prize service protocol, an entertainment content service protocol, a concierge service protocol, a lottery service protocol and a money transfer service protocol.

27. (Previously Amended) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, wherein a physical interface of the one or more communication ports is selected from the group consisting of RS-422/485, Fiber Optic, RS-232, DCS Current Loop, Link Progressive Current Loop, IEEE (Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers) 1394-compatible, Ethernet and USB (Universal Serial BUS)-compatible.

28. (Original) The communication mutliplexer device of claim 17, further comprising:

an antenna connected to the output communication port.

29. (Previously Amended) The communication mutliplexer device of claim 17, wherein the plurality of communication ports comprise 8 communication ports.

30. (Previously Amended) The communication mutliplexer device of claim 17, wherein the plurality of communication ports comprise 16 communication ports.

31. (Previously Amended) A method of providing communications between master gaming controller on a gaming machine and one or more game service servers in a communication multiplexer device connected to the gaming machine and the one or more game service servers, the method comprising:

establishing communications with a boot server located outside of the communication multiplexer device;

initializing one or more of a plurality of communication ports on the communications multiplexer device wherein each of the initialized communication ports is connected to a game service network interface on the gaming machine;

mapping each of the initialized communication ports to a port game service server;

configuring each of the one or communication ports to accept a native communication protocol used by the master gaming controller on the gaming machine for communications over the game service network interface with the port game service server wherein the communication multiplexer device is transparent to the master gaming controller allowing the master gaming controller to communicate with a particular game service server without knowing whether the communication multiplexer device is in a communication path between the master gaming controller and the particular game service server;

establishing a communication connection between each communication port and the port game service server;

receiving a message from the master gaming controller via a first initialized communication port in the native communication protocol used on the first initialized communication port and

transmitting the message using a second communication protocol different from the native communication protocol to the port game service server mapped to the first initialized communication port.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the gaming machine employs regulated gaming software that provides messages in the native communication protocol to the one or more communication ports and wherein the regulated gaming software is not modified to accept messages transmitted in the second communication protocol.

33. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the communication multiplexer device is assigned an IP address by the boot server.

34. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising:

converting messages from the gaming machine in the native communication protocol received at one of the initialized communication ports to the second communication protocol; and

transmitting the messages in the second communication protocol to the port game service server.

35. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising:

converting messages from the port game server addressed to one of the initialized communication ports in the second communication protocol to the native communication protocol of the communication port; and

transmitting the messages in the native communication protocol via the initialized communication port to the master gaming controller on the gaming machine.

36. (Original) The method of claim 31, further comprising:

receiving a message from the port game service server wherein the message contains a communication port address; and

routing the message from the game service server to the communication port indicated by the communication port address.

37. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising:

receiving a message from the gaming machine at one of the initialized communication ports;

determining an address of the game service server corresponding to the one communication port; and

routing the message from the gaming machine to the address of the game service server.

38. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the native communication protocol is selected from the group consisting of RS-422/485, Fiber Optic, RS-232, DCS Current Loop, Link Progressive Current Loop, IEEE (Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers) 1394-compatible, Ethernet and USB (Universal Serial BUS)-compatible.

39. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the second communication protocol is a TCP/IP communication protocol.

40. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the one or more game service servers are selected from the group consisting of a prize server, a game server, an entertainment content server, a cashless ticketing server, progressive game server, a bonus game server, a concierge service server, a lottery server and a money transfer server.